



Country Databank

AUSTRALIA

o A U.S.-patterned graduate school is expected to open its doors in 1991 on a site 35 miles southwest of Sydney. Mary Lady Fairfax (widow of financier Sir William Fairfax, after whom the school will be named) is donating the land for the school which will be operated by the University of Rochester. It will offer a master's of business administration program. (The New York Times, February 8, 1988)

CANADA

o A five-million dollar scholarship fund is being established by the federal government of Canada with the intent of stemming the migration of Canadian student-athletes to the United States. Funding for the program will come from revenues from the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary and from the private sector. In addition, a major study will be conducted on the role of universities in the training of "elite" athletes to try to identify the place of university sports within the general Canadian sport system and to address concerns regarding the financing of university sports programs. (Times Higher Education Supplement, December 1, 1987)

EGYPT

o Assiut University Hospital, affiliated with the Assiut University Faculty of Medicine is now in operation. It will provide a modern facility for interns from the University's medical programs and includes facilities for treating kidney diseases and tumors and for performing cardiac surgery. (International Association of Universities, Bulletin, Vol. 35, No. 4, November 1987)

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

o The Geprüfter Wirtschaftsassistent der Industrie (Examined Commercial Assistant in Industry) is awarded upon completion of a two and one-half year program which alternates classroom instruction with practical experience in the iron, steel or chemical industry. While this is not a new program, it is not widely documented. Admission to the program requires the Abitur or the Fachhochschulreife. Students with a minimum of one year of professional experience can study for the official examinations (conducted by the Chamber of Industry and Commerce) which include sections on industrial business administration, accounting and financial management, economics and foreign language. The Certificate qualifies the holder for middle-level business positions. (Bundesanzeiger (Federal Register), October 1978, No. 204a)

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INDONESIA

o In an attempt to improve the standards of existing institutions, the Indonesian government has stopped issuing permits to operate private universities and colleges. This measure follows a similar announcement last year which froze the number of state-run universities. The government is reviewing the 762 private schools and the 44 state schools in order to assure that minimum requirements and standards are upheld. (Times Higher Education Supplement, February 19, 1988)

ISRAEL

o As reported in January 1988, military authorities have closed three institutions in the West Bank for a period of one month in an attempt to halt disturbances in the occupied territories. The schools affected are: The Islamic University in Hebron, the College of Science and Technology - Abu Dis, and the Tira Teacher Training College for Women in Ramallah. More recent information indicates that the closures have been extended for an additional month. At the end of that period the authorities will decide whether to re-open the institutions or extend the closures for another month. (Times Higher Education Supplement, January 8, 1988; Al-Fajr, April 3, 1988)

ITALY

o In an effort to reduce the number of medical doctors produced by its universities, Italy has instituted an entrance examination for those students wishing to pursue medical studies. Since 1969, the Maturità had been the sole criteria for admission. The exam will consist of 70 multiple choice questions covering secondary-level biology, chemistry, physics and mathematics and will contribute approximately two-thirds of the overall possible marks used for the admission decision. The Maturità will contribute the additional third. (Commission of the European Communities, ERASMUS Newsletter, February 1987)

JAPAN

o The Ministry of Education plans to expand its already extensive higher education system to meet with the projected increase in the 18-year-old population group. An additional 80,000 university and college places will be provided by 1992 to accommodate the population growth resulting from Japan's second post-war baby boom. The number of 18-year-olds is expected to drop by the end of the 1990's and half of the 80,000 places will then be withdrawn. (Times Higher Education Supplement, February 5, 1988)

MALAYSIA

o Construction of a new permanent campus for the University Utara Malaysia is scheduled to begin later this year. Also, the university's proposed institutes of small industries management and quantity management studies (intended to improve the quality of management in the country) have received the backing of Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. (Times Higher Education Supplement, February 5, 1988)

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SCOTLAND

o Scotland has experienced a 30% rise in its number of full-time postgraduate university students over the years 1980 to 1985, according to the latest Scottish Education Department Statistical Bulletin. This figure included a 42% increase in overseas students. (Times Higher Education Supplement, January 1, 1988)

SRI LANKA

o The University of Colombo and the University of Kelaniya are both closed for an indefinite period of time following student protests and disruptions of examinations in response to police raids. Raids took place in December 1987 at the University of Kelaniya and the University of Sri Jayawardhanapura by police searching for guns and ammunition allegedly hidden by students. (Times Higher Education Supplement, January 8, 1988)

TURKEY

o During the last decade lower secondary education was made available to all Turkish students. A recent report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recommends a greater flexibility in the curriculum, as the current system was designed for a selected minority of university-bound students. Educational authorities are planning to stream 60% of the students into vocational and technical education in the future. In addition, there is a shortage of qualified teachers despite recent government efforts to train new teachers at the university level and to offer continuing education for practicing teachers at the newly established Open University. (Le Monde de L'Education, February 1988)

UNITED KINGDOM

o The Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) announced that it will accept the recently introduced Advanced Supplementary (AS) level examination for admission to CNAA degree programs. The AS level subjects are

intended to "broaden the curriculum for the A level students without diluting the academic standards. AS levels, which will be taken over two years alongside A levels, will cover not less than half the ground covered by an A level in the subject concerned, but demanding the same intellectual standard." (British Qualifications, 18th Edition, London: Kogan Page, 1988, p. 11). CNAA will now accept four "AS" level passes in lieu of two "A" level passes for general admission. Students may, therefore, be admitted to CNAA-approved programs if they possess either a combination of "A" and "AS" levels or only "AS" level passes. (CNAA Higher Education News, February 1987)

o The Manpower Services Commission has funded a pioneer program offering employees the chance to obtain formal academic credit for work-based learning. Credit may be awarded at the undergraduate or graduate level. Starting with three companies in conjunction with three polytechnics, the program will be based on "learning contracts," which are individual programs drawn up to meet the needs of the employee and the company. Study methods will include work-based learning, in-house training, open learning or conventional college attendance. The studies, once completed, can be registered with the Council for National Academic Awards' Credit Accumulation Unit. (Times Higher Education Supplement, February 5, 1988)

o The London College of Furniture was recently awarded a contract to operate as a faculty of the City of London Polytechnic for an initial period of three years. The Polytechnic will act as an agent for the College in matters concerning academic affairs, including course validation. The college will continue to be maintained and financed by the Inner London Education Authority. This will guarantee the continuation of the non-advanced further education courses (which currently make up 70% of the College's courses) while allowing for the expansion of the advanced level work (in conjunction with the Polytechnic). (Times Higher Education Supplement, January 1, 1988)

o Goldsmith's College has been granted full status as a member of the University of London. Prior to this action, the College was unable to appoint professors and other professional staff, which resulted in the inability to attract research grants. The College intends to continue to build on its strengths in continuing education, community education and the more traditional fields of humanities, social sciences, education and the creative arts. (Times Higher Education Supplement, December 18, 1987)

In Brief

o A new joint languages degree has been introduced involving the collaboration of institutions in Great Britain, France and Germany. The degree, "Applied Languages Europe," will yield a triple qualification upon completion. The program consists of high-level language skills training and studies of key features of the European societies involved as well as an introduction to the disciplines of law and economics. Graduates will be prepared for employment in industry, national and international organizations and as professional linguists. It is a four-year program, the first and last years to be spent at Ealing College of Higher Education in England and the middle two years at Cologne (Federal Republic of Germany) and Aix-en-Provence (France). The triple award will be simultaneously granted by: The Council for National Academic Awards (B.A. Honours in Applied Languages), Université de Provence (Maîtrise Internationale), Fachhochschule Köln (Diploma: EuroStudien-gang). (CNAAL Higher Education News, No. 3, December 1987.)

o A new English proficiency certification program entitled EUROCERT has been developed jointly by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton, New Jersey and the National Institute for Educational Measurement (CITO) in Arnhem, Netherlands. The first administration took place at test centers throughout Europe in March 1988.

To earn certification, examinees must achieve score requirements on three tests: the Test of

English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the Test of Written English (TWE), and the Test of Spoken English (TSE). Examinees can achieve one of two levels of certification: certified (requiring minimum scores of 53 on each section of the TOEFL exam, 4.5 on the TWE and 220 on the TSE) or certified with honors (requiring a minimum of 60 on each section of the TOEFL, 6.0 on the TWE and 260 on the TSE).

The EUROCERT certificate offers proof of a person's all-around ability to communicate effectively in English and can be presented as a credential in educational, professional and governmental pursuits. EUROCERT certificates are issued directly to the examinees and are not intended to replace the official score reports issued by ETS. It is recommended that institutions requiring any or all of the component exams continue to require that the official score reports be submitted.

Test dates for 1988-1989 are March 12, May 14, September 16, October 22, 1988 and March 11, May 13, 1989. Information regarding the EUROCERT program can be obtained from CITO-EUROCERT, P.O. Box 1203, 6901 BE Arnhem, Netherlands, or Educational Testing Service, P.O. Box 6155, Princeton, NJ 08541-6155.

o As part of the continuing struggle to halt the flow of bogus degrees, the government of the United Kingdom intends to introduce legislation making the award of non-authorized degrees an offense. The proposal would restrict the list of degree-granting institutions to those authorized by Royal Charter or an Act of Parliament. This list will be prepared by the secretary of state [of education].

The issuance of any other award described as a degree, using the terms "bachelor," "master," or "doctor," or comparable in appearance to those offered by an official degree-granting body would constitute an offense. Foreign institutions with branches operating in the United Kingdom would not be covered by this legislation. Such institutions, however, would be required to specify their status on all certificates and correspondence to ensure that their awards could not be mistaken for authorized British degrees. (Association of Commonwealth Universities, ABCD, No. 82, February 1988)

Evaluating International Credentials: Problems of Transfer Credit

Part II

by Alan Margolis

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[Editor's Note: Part I of this article, which appeared in the Winter '88 issue of World Education News & Reviews, focused on the theoretical aspects of and conflicts which can arise from the evaluation of foreign transfer credit. The second and concluding installment is concerned with the practical issues of determining quality of performance and the amounts of work, in terms of U.S. credits, successfully completed.]

In order to assess foreign education for transfer credit properly, the credential evaluator must understand institutional practices. There are three separate evaluations which can be made in this assessment: course credit value; grading; and the establishment of equivalencies.

Course Credit Value

Defining a semester hour is integral to a proper evaluation. A semester hour is defined as one 50-minute period of lecture or recitation for a duration of 15 weeks, totaling 750 minutes a term per credit. Laboratory and practicum work is often quantified as two, three, or four such 50-minute hours for each credit.

When dealing with systems which provide this information, decision-making is relatively easy. Exceptions or difficulties may arise when a system provides many classroom hours per week which would result in a great deal of credit if the straight arithmetic

formula is applied. Generally, this is due to a quantification of student study responsibility different from that used in the United States. In giving orientation to new students, we often tell them that for each hour of lecture or recitation spent in class, approximately two hours of preparation are necessary. Thus, a student in the United States who takes 15 credits is expected to spend about 30 hours per week in preparation for a total time commitment of 45 hours per week.

In systems where the hours noted on academic documents appear excessive, it probably is true that much less time outside of class is required. Whether because library collections are limited or books are unavailable in the language of instruction, there usually is an explanation for the additional classroom hours spent each week. One way to deal with this is always to apply your institution's maximum term credit load for the highest number of credits allowed and never exceed this for any given semester's transfer credit. Also apply the average semester credit load (usually the total number of credits required for a bachelor's degree divided by eight--the number of semesters in which a full-time student "normally" obtains a degree). Thus, for a 120-credit bachelor's degree program, the average semester load would be 15 credits while for a 128-credit program, it would be 16 credits. By using these two guidelines, the number of total credits granted will be rational for your own institution.

For example, a student from a Taiwanese university presents

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a transcript which indicates 24 credits completed in a semester. If you apply your institution's maximum semester credit hours, let us say 18, you would allow only 18 of the 24 credits in transfer. Whether you discount eight credits, or apply a percentage factor to each credit, depends on your institution's policies. The application of a percentage factor should not be determined by a single semester's credits but rather upon a calculation based on the total credits required for the degree in your institution, divided by the number of credits the foreign institution requires. Again, using Taiwan, in a four year bachelor's program, 160 credits may be required for the degree, while U.S. institution "A" requires 120. $120/160 = 75\%$. Thus, .75 becomes the number by which the Taiwanese credits are multiplied in order to arrive at "U.S.-like" credits. The 24 credits discussed above, when multiplied by the .75 factor, reduce to 18 semester credits. If your institution has a maximum semester credit load of 17, you would have to consider denying one additional credit.

The process is complicated further when either the number of hours indicated for each course is undifferentiated as to lecture and recitation on the one hand, and laboratory or practicum on the other; or worse, when no hours are given. In the first case, it would be wise to obtain a copy of the syllabus for the courses which usually have laboratory or practica and to determine whether "preparation time"--usually study periods not normally credited in the United States--are included. In the absence of these data, a good guess, within the context of the institutional guidelines above, is the best that you can do.

The real trouble comes when you obtain a "transcript" which does not contain any indication of hours. This is often true, for example, with the British system. When this occurs, the "average year" concept frequently is applied. Here the assumption is made that a full-time student is a full-time student, regardless of the educational system. This is in keeping with the earlier discussion of applying maxima to semester credits based upon institutional standards. If a transcript is received with a notation of five courses being taken for an academic

year, this approach would result in the assigning of six semester hours to each course, as a full year would be 30 semester hours. As it is possible that the courses in the foreign system are weighted, such as one meeting twice as frequently as another, this might not be completely accurate. Still, without a syllabus review--a valuable but often impractical, time-consuming process for most admissions officers--this is the best one can do. If an error occurs, to the students' disadvantage, you will be notified soon enough.

Grading

Once we have established what is transferable in terms of academic level (as discussed in Part I) and a decision has been made as to how many credits it is worth, the next issue to wrestle with is whether the quality of performance is sufficiently high to be eligible for transfer. At the undergraduate level, most U.S. institutions require a grade of "C" (or its foreign equivalent) in order to be transferable.

Three issues come into play here. The first is the determination of whether there is a "D" equivalent grade in a particular educational system. Quality concerns beyond this are more related to admissions decision-making rather than to eligibility for the transference of credit. In the U.S. system a "C" may be defined as a quality level minimally required to obtain a degree, but not the lowest passing grade. When viewing foreign systems, we frequently find that the lowest passing grade is also the minimum grade average required to graduate--there are no lower passing grades. An attempt to determine the "C" equivalent by ascertaining grade distribution may not be valid, therefore, as many foreign educational systems do not use the upper end of the grade scale, except in rare circumstances. It is believed that the intent of the U.S. system is that the "C" represents the grade average required to meet the standards for graduation. Therefore, this criterion should be applied to foreign systems, both for the determination of eligibility for transfer of credit and for the calculation of a grade point average. You should not be troubled by the fact that a system does not have a "D" equivalent.

